

From: Steven White
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/29/01 3:47pm
Subject: A public comment

This is a comment from just an ordinary person (although I do program computers for a living) urging the STRONGEST POSSIBLE measures to bring Microsoft under control. I base my opinion mainly on two documents. I read the findings of fact from the trial and found them so clearly written they were almost a pleasure to read. I wrote to the Minnesota attorney general supporting stronger measures and got back from him another very clear document explaining why the proposed settlement is not strong enough. I can't believe you all haven't seen these, so I would waste your time explaining them.

I did also look at the settlement documents, and found them not nearly as clear. I saw, or had pointed out to me, several inconsistencies or loopholes that would allow Microsoft to continue its documented practice of essentially bullying other companies in ways that prevent competing products from being sold or even offered for sale. Once again, I am sure that others more qualified than I have pointed them out to you and I shouldn't waste your time with my less eloquent attempts. Explanations are all over the trade press and even in the mainstream newspapers.

I am worried that a company that behaves in ways that I consider immoral and courts consider illegal is being let off without any punishment and, because of a less than ironclad settlement, being given too many ways to avoid changing its behavior. This is a company that drove Netscape out of independent existence by illegal tactics. This is a company that drove DR-DOS and BE-OS out of existence (of course they didn't actually "do" it, but for all practical purposes, they did). This is a company run by people who are willing to, essentially, lie in court, as they did with the doctored video tape episode that the press had such fun with. These are the guys who, when ordered to make a version of Windows 95 without Internet Explorer integrated, made a version of Windows 95 that didn't work--"compliance with middle finger extended" as one newspaper write put it. This is company run by Bill "How much can we pay you to hurt Netscape" Gates and Steve "To heck with Janet Reno" Ballmer. (I'm not making that up, it was in the newspapers).

The government wants, I assume, companies and individuals to be able to write software and have a reasonable chance to sell it. Microsoft wants, in my opinion and the opinions of others, no software to be sold unless it comes from Microsoft. They have taken advantage of every way available to them to get what they want, and I am sure they will continue to do that. You must make sure your settlement proposal is not one of them.

Thank you.

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The opinions expressed here are my own and not those of my employer, whose computer I used to type them.

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